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AREA 88

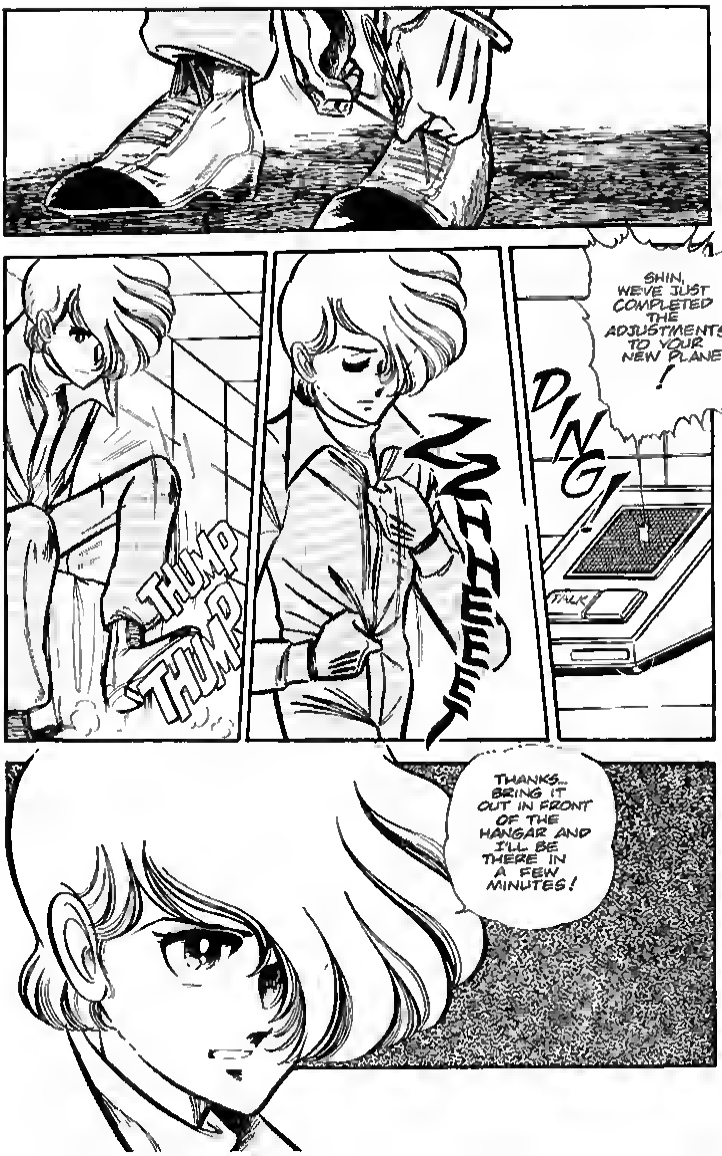
by KAORU SHINTANI

25

BIWEEKLY

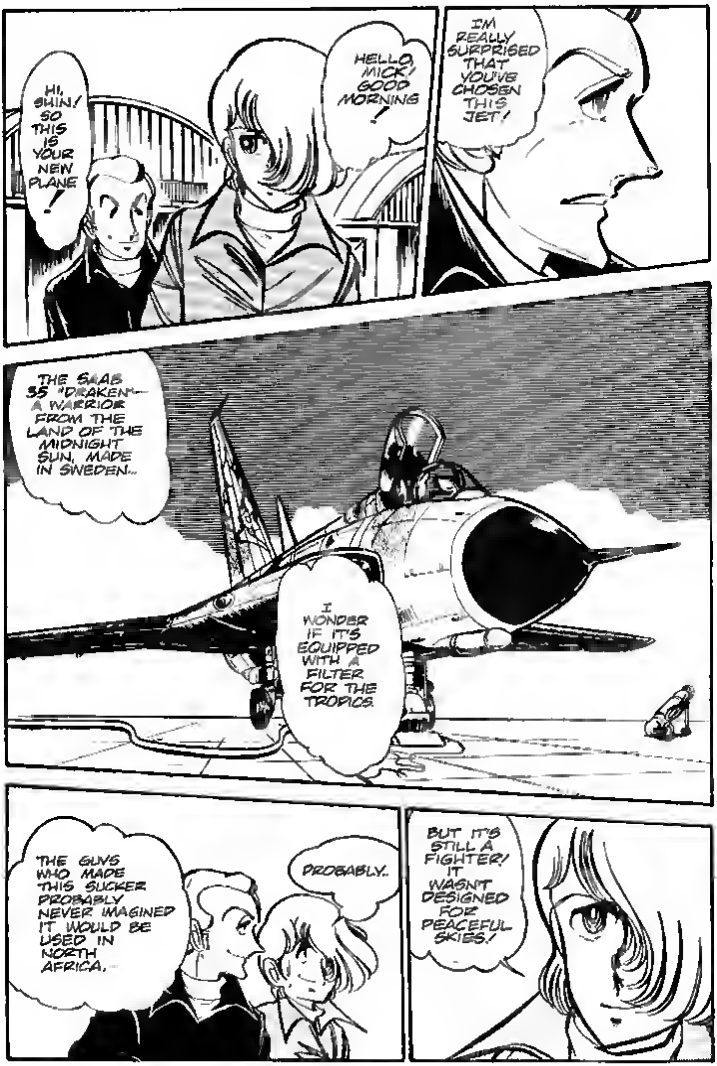
Mack's New Tomcat Challenges Shin's Dragon in a Battle of Skill, Speed and Thrills!

NOT FOR SALE IN CANADA


SHIN, WE'VE JUST COMPLETED THE ADJUSTMENTS TO YOUR NEW PLANE!
DING!
TALK
NIGHTWIND
THUMP THUMP
THANKS... BRING IT OUT IN FRONT OF THE HANGAR AND I'LL BE THERE IN A FEW MINUTES!

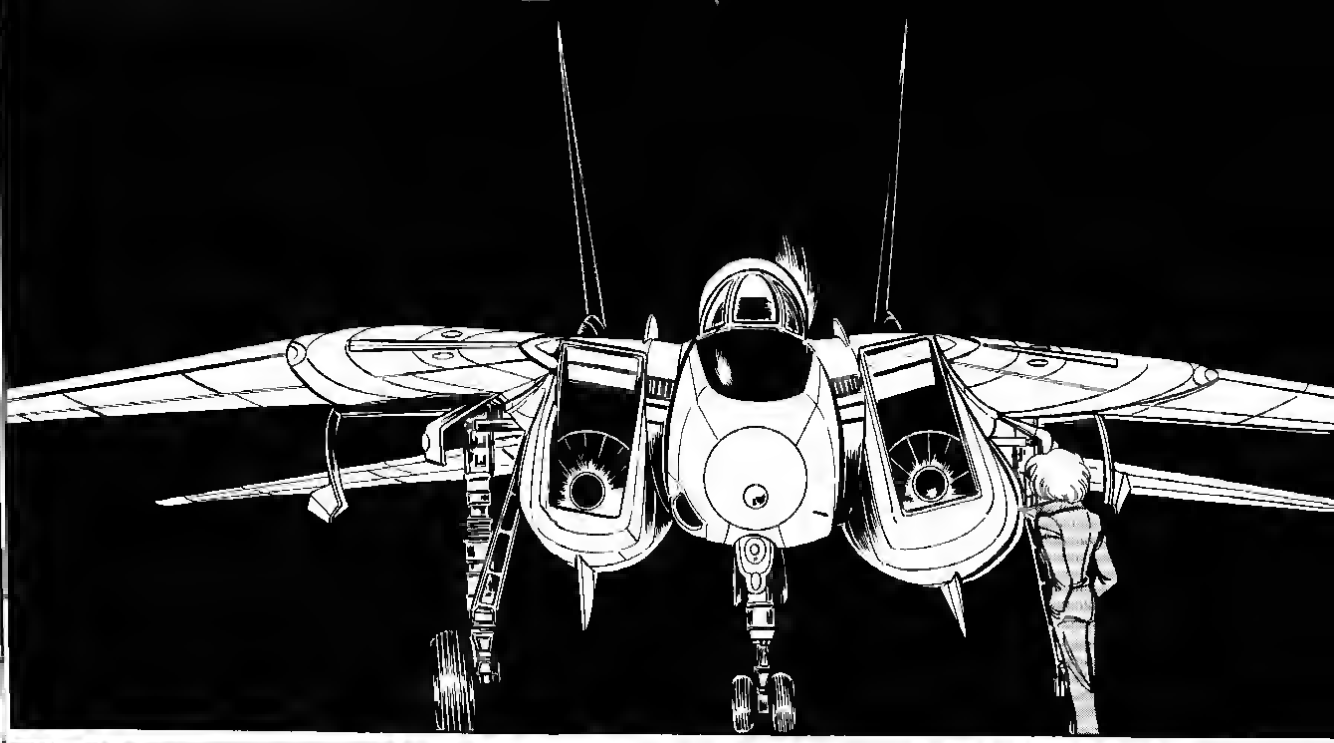
MISSION 25

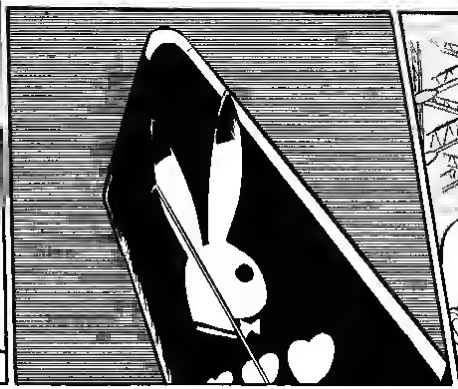
the new wings

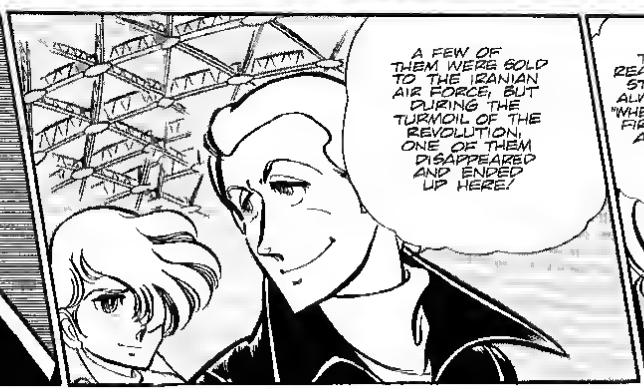

HI, SWIN! SO THIS IS YOUR NEW PLANE!
HELLO, MICK! GOOD MORNING!
I'M REALLY SURPRISED THAT YOU'VE CHOSEN THIS JET!
THE SAAB 35 "DRAKEN"— A WARRIOR FROM THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN, MADE IN SWEDEN..
I WONDER IF IT'S EQUIPPED WITH A FILTER FOR THE TROPICS.
THE GUYS WHO MADE THIS SUCKER PROBABLY NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD BE USED IN NORTH AFRICA.
PROBABLY..
BUT IT'S STILL A FIGHTER! IT WASN'T DESIGNED FOR PEACEFUL SKIES!

YEAH, BUT THE FIRST PROTOTYPE WAS FLOWN IN 1958/ THIS IS A REALLY OLD MODEL ARE YOU SURE IT'S WHAT YOU WANT?!
I THINK SO. I DISCUSSED IT WITH MCCOY FOR A LONG TIME. HE HAD OTHER AFFORDABLE PLANES TO CHOOSE FROM, BUT THIS ONE WAS THE BEST.
I GOT USED TO THE KFIR A PLANE WITH DELTA WINGS IS EASIER FOR ME TO PILOT, NOW.
BY THE WAY, YOUVE CHANGED YOUR PLANE, TOO, HAVEN'T YOU?
YEAH! I COULD HARDLY WAIT FOR YOU TO BRING IT UP!
I ASKED MCCOY WHAT YOU BOUGHT BUT HE WOULDN'T TELL ME. I KNEW HE HAD IT BROUGHT IN ON A C-130!
HEH, HEH, HEH. DON'T BE TOO SURPRISED!
I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT. LET'S SEE... IT'S THE NEWEST MODEL PLANE IN AREA 88--
AND IT'S ONE I'M USED TO
A PLANE YOU'RE USED TO...? AN F-4 PHANTOM ISN'T THE LATEST ANYMORE
IS IT AN F-14 TOMCAT?!

YOU GOT IT!
BUT HOW DID YOU GET SUCH AN ADVANCED MODEL?!

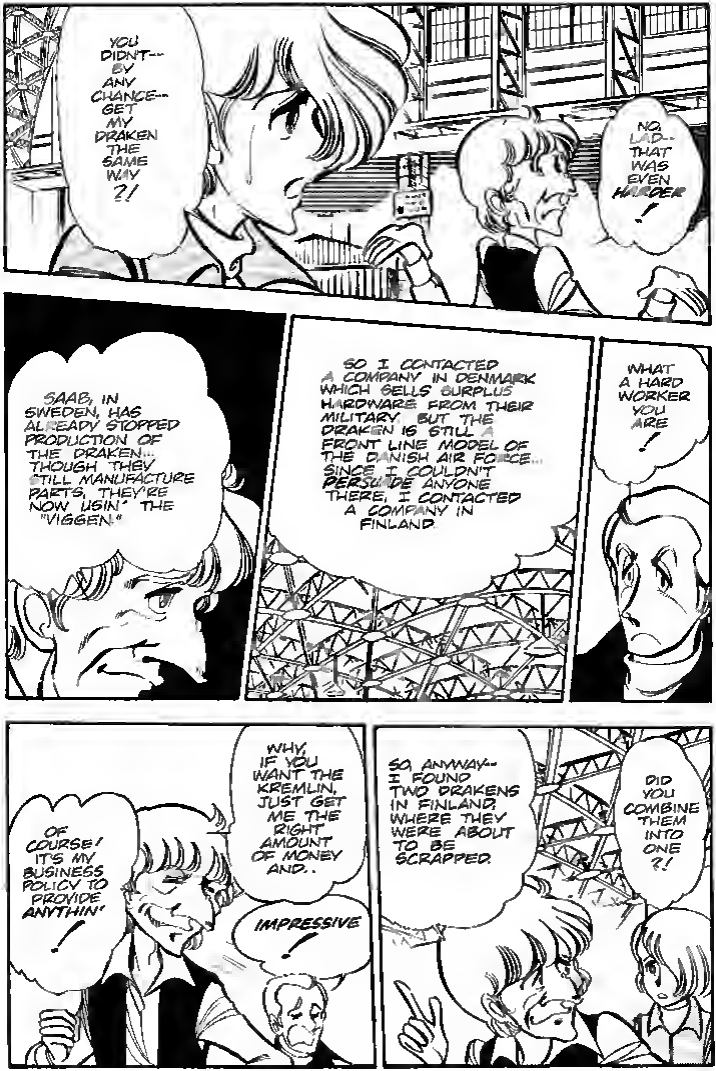





A FEW OF THEM WERE SOLD TO THE IRANIAN AIR FORCE, BUT DURING THE TURMOIL OF THE REVOLUTION, ONE OF THEM DISAPPEARED AND ENDED UP HERE!

THAT'S REALLY MCCOY'S STYLE. HE ALWAYS SAYS, "WHERE THERE'S FIRE, THERE'S A FORTUNE"...

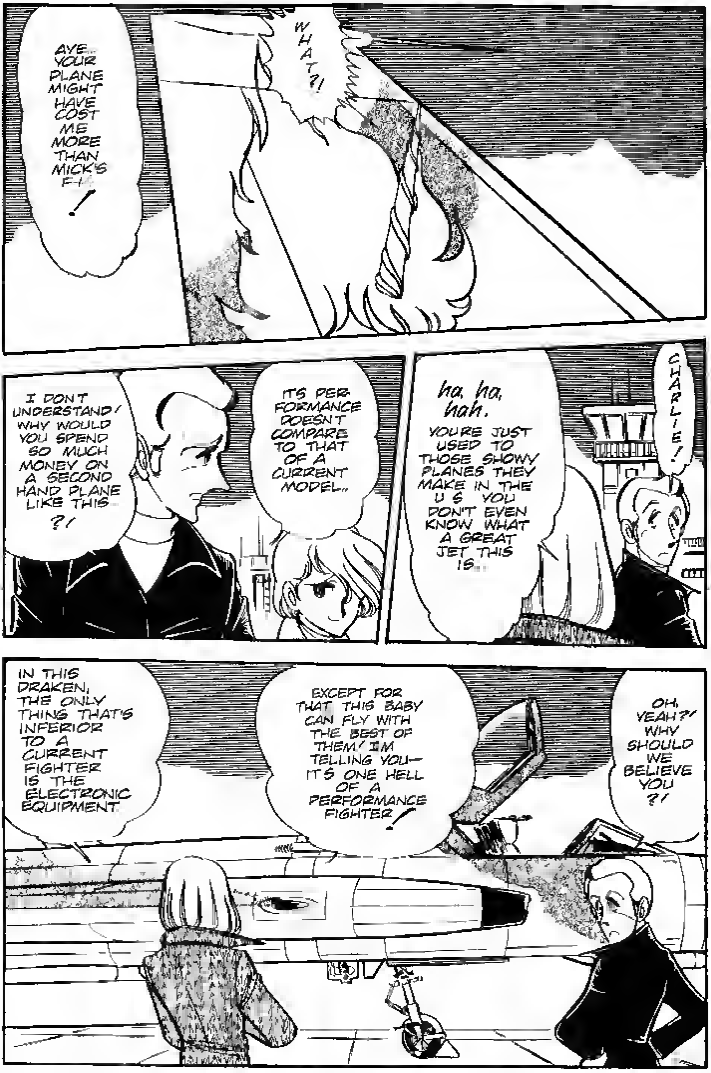
DON'T BE SAYIN' SUCH DISREPUTABLE THINGS ABOUT ME, LAD!
YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE I'M A LOOTER!
HA, HA, HA-- BUT IT'S NOT LIKE YOU PICKED UP AN ABANDONED PLANE SOMEWHERE, IS IT?!
WELL, IT'S TRUE THAT I USED SOME DIRTY TRICKS.. BUT IT'S ALL LEGAL ON PAPER!
BECAUSE OF THE CONFUSION CAUSED BY THE AYATOLLAH'S TAKEOVER, SOME OF THE PLANES WERE BEING HELD IN A WAREHOUSE IN ITALY
THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO GO BACK TO THE UNITED STATES..
..I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A WEE CHANGE IN THE SHIPPING PAPERS, SAYIN' THAT THIS PLANE WAS ALREADY SENT TO IRAN./
THAT'S TERRIBLE!
THEN, I SECRETLY CHANGED THE SERIAL NUMBER WITH THAT OF A PLANE THAT WAS INCAPABLE OF FLYIN' DUE TO AN ACCIDENT...
THAT WAY, I WAS ABLE TO BUY THIS PLANE AS SCRAP. AND THAT'S THE TALE...


YOU DIDN'T--BY ANY CHANCE--GET MY DRAKEN THE SAME WAY?!
NO, I'D--THAT WAS EVEN HARDER!
SAAB, IN SWEDEN, HAS ALREADY STOPPED PRODUCTION OF THE DRAKEN... THOUGH THEY STILL MANUFACTURE PARTS, THEY'RE NOW USIN' THE "VIGGEN."
SO I CONTACTED A COMPANY IN DENMARK WHICH SELLS SURPLUS HARDWARE FROM THEIR MILITARY. BUT THE DRAKEN IS STILL A FRONT LINE MODEL OF THE DANISH AIR FORCE... SINCE I COULDN'T PERSUADE ANYONE THERE, I CONTACTED A COMPANY IN FINLAND.
WHAT A HARD WORKER YOU ARE!
OF COURSE! IT'S MY BUSINESS POLICY TO PROVIDE ANYTHIN'!
WHY, IF YOU WANT THE KREMLIN, JUST GET ME THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF MONEY AND..
IMPRESSIVE!
SO, ANYWAY--I FOUND TWO DRAKENS IN FINLAND, WHERE THEY WERE ABOUT TO BE SCRAPPED.
DID YOU COMBINE THEM INTO ONE?!

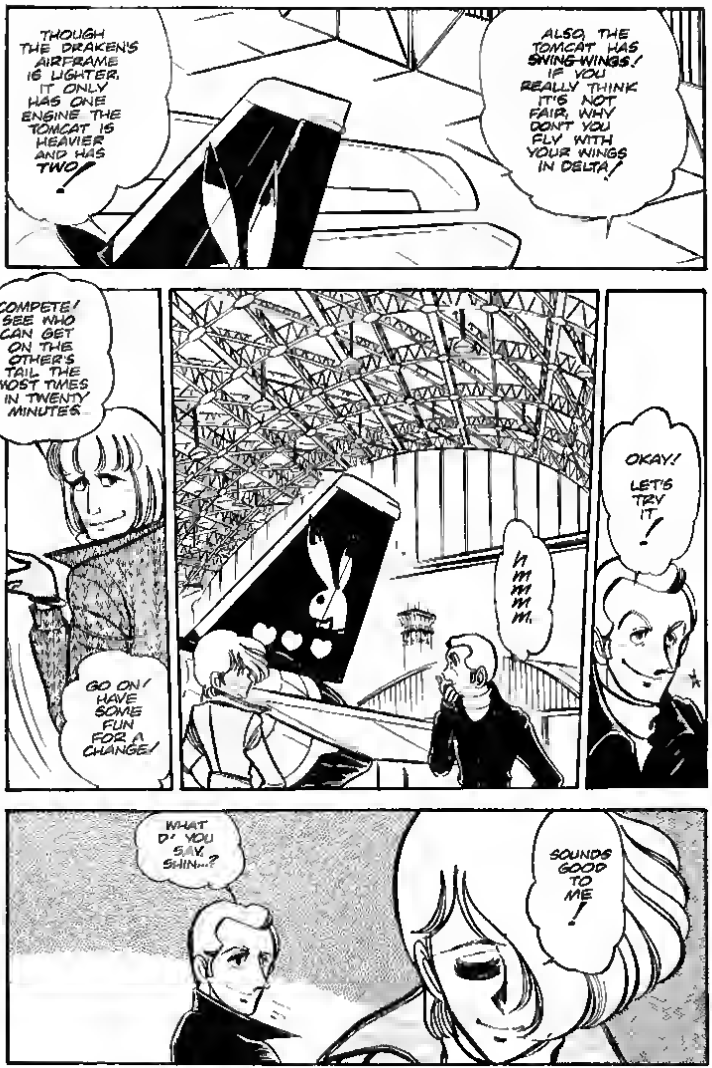
I COMBINED THEIR AIRFRAMES, BUT THE ENGINE WAS THE PROBLEM! NEITHER PLANE HAD ONE!
SO I FIGURED I COULD BUY THE ENGINE FROM SAAB DIRECTLY.. BUT THEY SAID IT WOULD TAKE OVER A MONTH TO GET PERMISSION FROM THEIR DEFENSE MINISTRY.. I WAS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE!

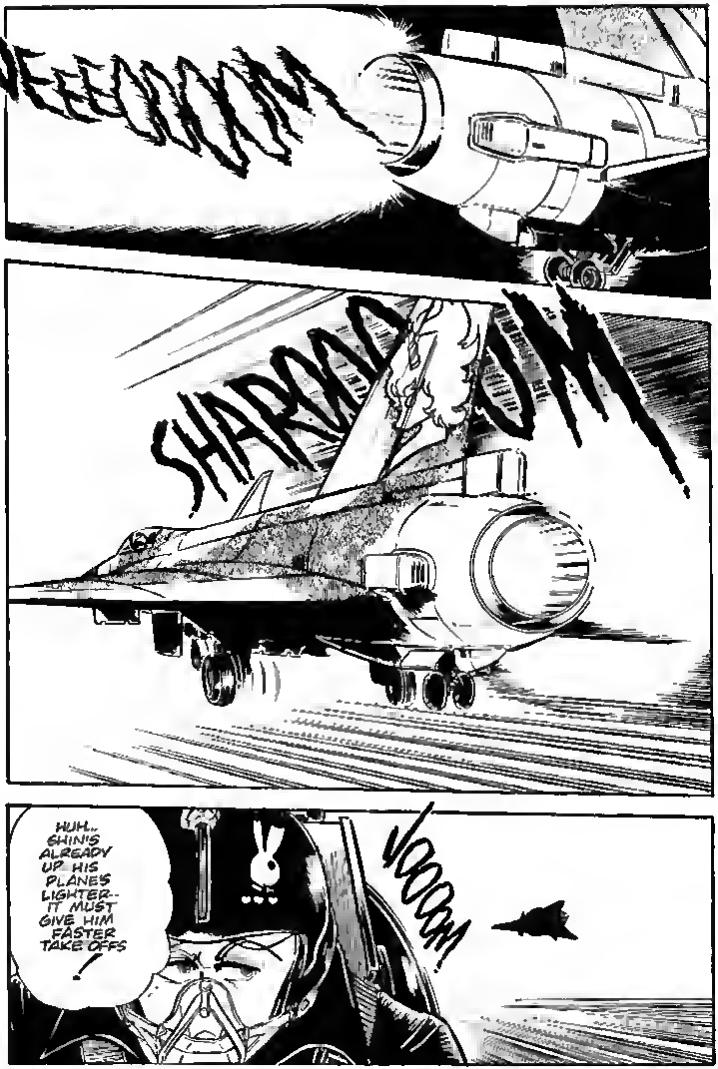
YOU REALIZE THAT SWEDEN HAS A NATIONAL POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY.
BUT, ISN'T THE ENGINE MANUFACTURED BY ROLLS ROYCE AVON IN ENGLAND?
IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN EASY, SINCE IT WAS A BRITISH COMPANY.

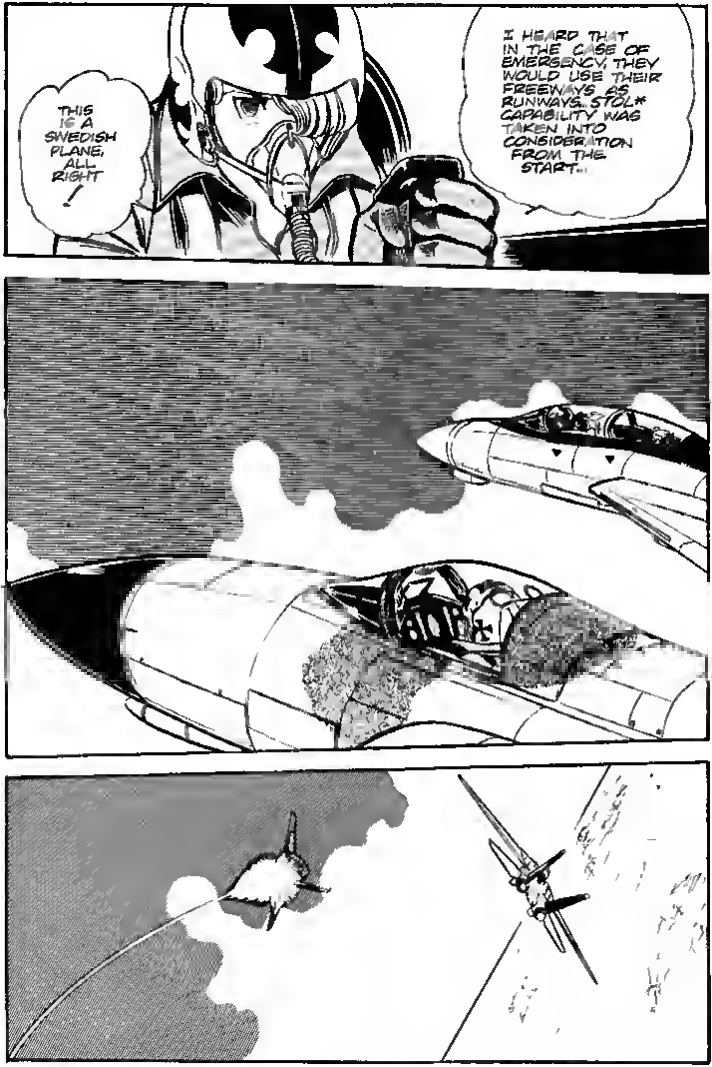
NO WAY! THE ENGINE WAS EASY, YES-- BUT THE FM67 AFTERBURNER ATTACHED TO THE ENGINE IS MANUFACTURED EXCLUSIVELY BY VOLVO IN SWEDEN!
I WENT ALL OVER EUROPE, AND FINALLY BOUGHT THE FM67 FROM A USED PARTS COMPANY IN GERMANY.. THE ENGINE, I VIRTUALLY STOLE FROM A COMPANY IN THE NETHERLANDS!
SO, THAT PLANE IS PRACTICALLY MADE FROM YOUR BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS..


AYE... YOUR PLANE MIGHT HAVE COST ME MORE THAN MICK'S F-1!
WHAT?!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY WOULD YOU SPEND SO MUCH MONEY ON A SECOND HAND PLANE LIKE THIS...?!
IT'S PERFORMANCE DOESN'T COMPARE TO THAT OF A CURRENT MODEL...
ha, ha, hah.
YOU'RE JUST USED TO THOSE SHOWY PLANES THEY MAKE IN THE U.S. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A GREAT JET THIS IS...
CHARLIE!
IN THIS DRAKEN, THE ONLY THING THAT'S INFERIOR TO A CURRENT FIGHTER IS THE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT.
EXCEPT FOR THAT THIS BABY CAN FLY WITH THE BEST OF THEM! I'M TELLING YOU— IT'S ONE HELL OF A PERFORMANCE FIGHTER!
OH, YEAH?! WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE YOU?!

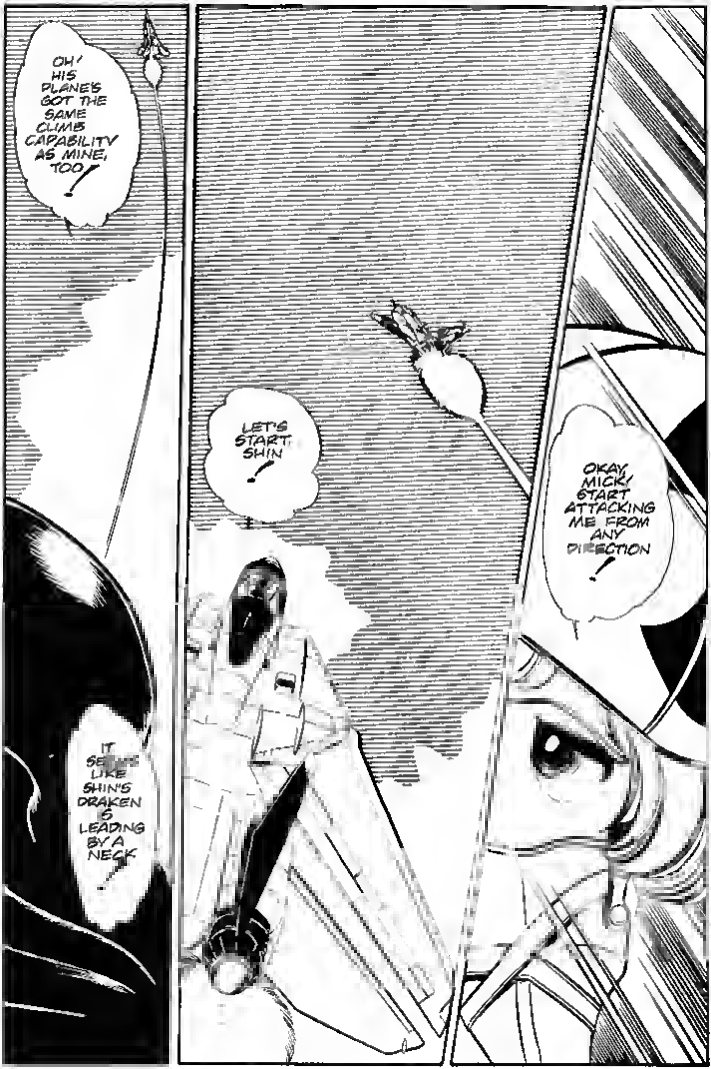
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ALMOST GOT SHIN KILLED THE OTHER DAY! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE COVERING HIM!
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE SAAB 35 DRAKEN?
I TOOK OFF BECAUSE I THOUGHT HIS REAR-WARNING RADAR WAS WORKING. I FIGURED HE HAD ALREADY HEARD THE ALARM...
I'M SORRY, SHIN...
THAT'S OKAY... I SURVIVED..
WELL, GETTING BACK TO WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT--- WHY DON'T YOU TRY A MOCK BATTLE BETWEEN YOUR PLANES..?
YOUR SKILLS ARE CLOSELY MATCHED, SO IT'LL BE CLEAR WHICH PLANE IS BETTER!
WAIT A MINUTE, CHARLIE! THAT'S NOT FAIR!
I GOT USED TO THE F-16 IN THE MILITARY, BUT SHIN WOULD BE FLYING HIS DRAKEN FOR THE FIRST TIME!
SHIN'S DRAKEN IS AS GOOD AS NEW, BECAUSE IT WAS COMPLETELY OVERHAULED!
BUT YOUR TOMCAT'S BEEN SLEEPING IN A WAREHOUSE FOR A LOOONG TIME!


THOUGH THE DRAKEN'S AIRFRAME IS LIGHTER, IT ONLY HAS ONE ENGINE! THE TOMCAT IS HEAVIER AND HAS TWO!
ALSO, THE TOMCAT HAS SWING-WINGS! IF YOU REALLY THINK IT'S NOT FAIR, WHY DON'T YOU FLY WITH YOUR WINGS IN DELTA!
COMPETE! SEE WHO CAN GET ON THE OTHER'S TAIL THE MOST TIMES IN TWENTY MINUTES.
GO ON! HAVE SOME FUN FOR A CHANGE!
Hmmmm.
OKAY! LET'S TRY IT!
WHAT D' YOU SAY, SHIN...?
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!


VEEEOOOM
SHAROOOOM
HUH... SHIN'S ALREADY UP. HIS PLANE'S LIGHTER... IT MUST GIVE HIM FASTER TAKE OFFS!
VOOOOM

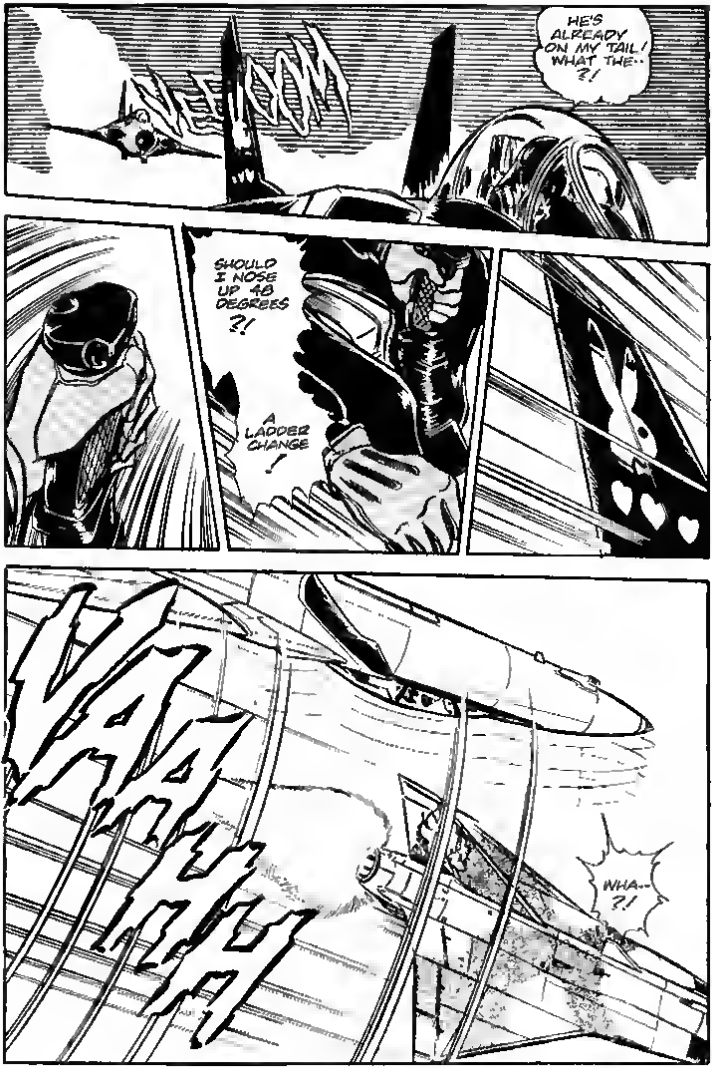

THIS IS A SWEDISH PLANE, ALL RIGHT!
I HEARD THAT IN THE CASE OF EMERGENCY, THEY WOULD USE THEIR FREEWAYS AS RUNWAYS. STOL* CAPABILITY WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION FROM THE START...

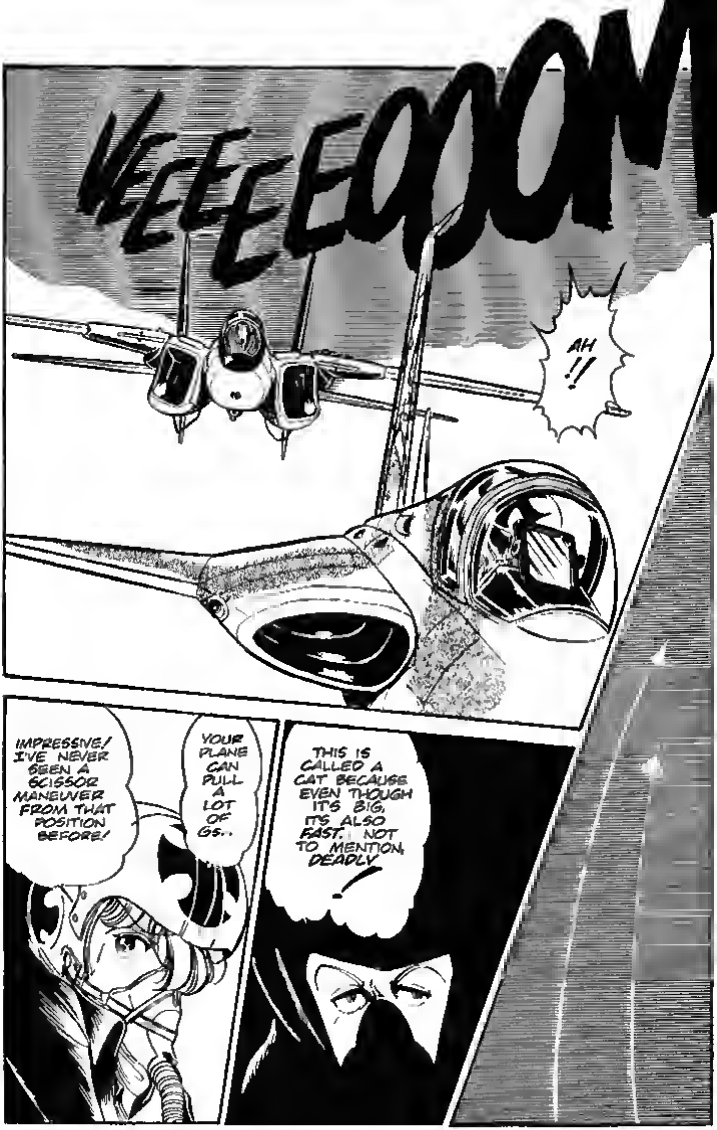
* STOL: SHORT TAKE OFF AND LANDING

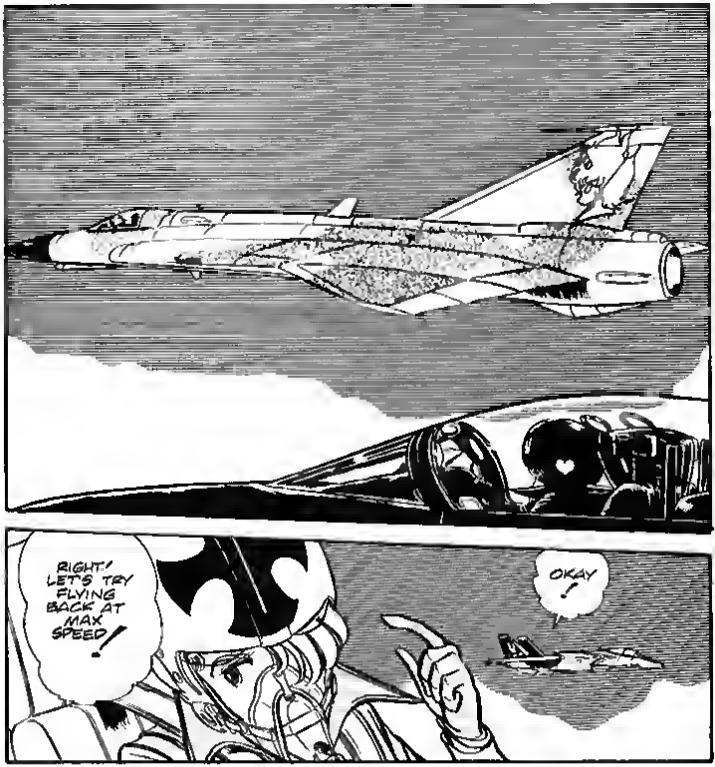

OH! HIS PLANE'S GOT THE SAME CLIMB CAPABILITY AS MINE, TOO!
IT SEEMS LIKE SHIN'S DRAKEN IS LEADING BY A NECK!
LET'S START, SHIN!
OKAY, MICKY! START ATTACKING ME FROM ANY DIRECTION!

WHICH WILL WIN, THE AMERICAN TOMCAT OR THE SWEDISH DRAGON-? WHAT A SIGHT!
THE TOMCAT HAS A TIGHTER TURNING RADIUS!
OH... NOW THEY'VE REALLY STARTED!

SHAROOOM
WOW! WHAT A SNAP-UP!
MY PLANE HAS TWICE AS MUCH THRUST, BUT HIS SNAP-UP IS STILL BETTER!
VROOM
OH!

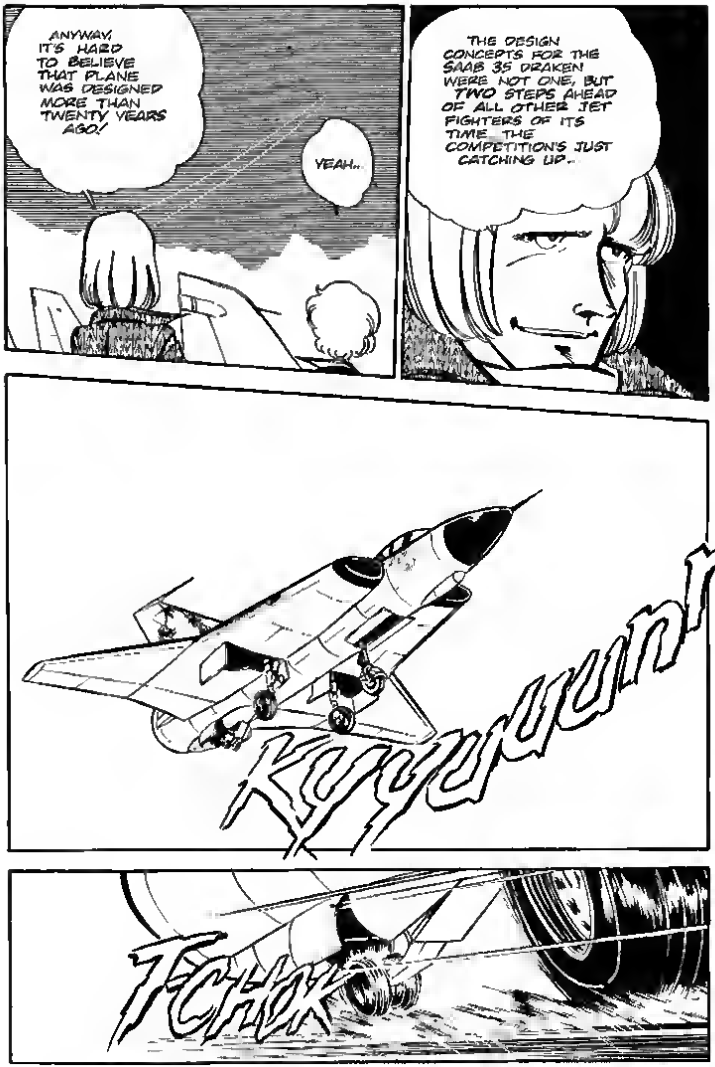

HE'S ALREADY ON MY TAIL! WHAT THE..?!
SHOULD I NOSE UP 48 DEGREES?!
A LADDER CHANGE!
WHA...?!


VEEEEOOOM
AH !!
THIS IS CALLED A CAT BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH IT'S BIG, IT'S ALSO FAST. NOT TO MENTION, DEADLY
YOUR PLANE CAN PULL A LOT OF Gs..
IMPRESSIVE! I'VE NEVER SEEN A SCISSOR MANEUVER FROM THAT POSITION BEFORE!


RIGHT! LET'S TRY FLYING BACK AT MAX SPEED!
OKAY!

SHEEEEOOOM!

I WONDER IF THE F-14 TOMCAT HAS BETTER AERIAL COMBAT CAPABILITIES, LIKE I THOUGHT..
PROBABLY. THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN HIGH-ALTITUDE COMBAT!
BUT HALF OUR MISSIONS IN AREA 88 ARE GROUND ATTACKS!
ALSO, IT'S PRETTY RARE FOR PILOTS TO ENGAGE IN AERIAL COMBAT ABOVE 20,000 FEET.
BESIDES, MICK DOESN'T REALIZE THAT THE DRAKEN'S ADVANTAGE IS AFTER IT LANDS! ON THE GROUND, SHIN WINS HANDS DOWN!
THE DRAKEN TAKES ONE-FIFTH THE AMOUNT OF TIME TO MAINTAIN. IT ONLY TAKES FIVE MINUTES TO RELOAD THE MISSILES AND MACHINE GUN AMMO AND THEN TAKE OFF!
IT CLIMBS TO 33,000 FEET IN TWO MINUTES AND TWENTY SECONDS! NOW, THAT'S FAST!
HMMMM... CHARLIE, HAVE YOU FLOWN A DRAKEN BEFORE?
NO... I HAVEN'T...


ANYWAY, IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT PLANE WAS DESIGNED MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO!
YEAH..
THE DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR THE SAAB 35 DRAKEN WERE NOT ONE, BUT TWO STEPS AHEAD OF ALL OTHER JET FIGHTERS OF ITS TIME. THE COMPETITION'S JUST CATCHING UP.
Kyuuuunn
FCHOK

Skoooo
HOW WAS IT YOU GUYS?!
I'M SATISFIED!
ME, I'M JUST GLAD TO BE BACK IN A PLANE I'M USED TO!
I'M RELIEVED! IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE SATISFIED CUSTOMERS, THAT'S FOR DAMN SURE! ANYTHING ELSE YOU TWO NEED?
I'D LIKE THE REAR SEAT TAKEN OUT OF MY TOMCAT I JUST WANT A SINGLE SEATER!
HERE AT AREA 88, I ONLY NEED TO USE MODE THREE OF THE WEAPONS CONTROL SYSTEM
SURE THING, MICK!

BY THE WAY, SHIN!
I HEARD THIS STORY IN WEST GERMANY YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN...
WHAT?
YOU TOLD ME YOU USED TO WORK FOR YAMATO AIRLINES, RIGHT?
WELL... YEAH, I WORKED FOR THEM... BUT I WAS JUST A STUDENT PILOT, NOT A LICENSED ONE...
WHAT ABOUT IT?
I HEARD THAT THEY WERE IN TROUBLE!
WHAT?!
I HEARD THEIR COMPANY PRESIDENT WAS REPLACED.
THEN IT SEEMS THERE WAS A CONSIDERABLE CHANGE IN SPARE PARTS AGENTS.
.....

THE COMPANY WHICH HAS TAKEN OVER THE SUPPLY OF PARTS IS RUN BY AN ITALIAN MAFIA DON
AND HIS COMPANY HAS A BAD REPUTATION
A NEW PRES-IDENT..?! WHO IS IT?!
I DONT KNOW THE DETAILS...
BUT HIS NAME IS LIKE... K-KAN SOMETHING... UH, YEAH-- KANZAKI! THAT'S IT!
KANZAKI ?!
KANZ...KI... WHY... HOW... HE... ?!
WELL, IT'S OVER THERE IN JAPAN, SO I COULDN'T CARE LESS...
BUT IT'S A GOOD THING THAT YOU'VE QUIT YAMATO, SHIN!

W-WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, SHIN?!
McCOY, TELL ME MORE! WHAT ELSE?!
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHIN' ELSE!
ALL OF THIS IS JUST GOSSIP! NOTHIN' MORE!
PLEASE...! I'LL PAY YOU WHATEVER YOU WANT! JUST FIND OUT McCOY!
W-WHAT'S THE MATTER?! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
THEN, PLEASE-- FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU CAN! PLEASE!
ANY COMPANY THAT DEALS WITH THAT MAFIA BOSS MIGHT AS WELL INVITE HIM TO ROB THEM BLIND, BECAUSE HE WILL!
THAT COMPANY WON'T BE LASTIN' LONG!

O-OKAY.. I'LL TRY..
I'LL BE HEADING BACK TO ROME NEXT WEEK. I'LL ASK ONE OF MY FRIENDS THERE. HE'LL KNOW!
THANKS.
I APPRECIATE IT, McCOY.
MISS YASUDA...
I'D LIKE A REPORT ON THE ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING HELD LAST WEEK!
YES, SIR!

TO BE CONTINUED